



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased in December to 4.5 percent from November's rate of 3.7 percent, as shown in Seaport Table 1. In December 2000, the rate was 4.6 percent. The December decrease in total employment was unusual. December is traditionally a strong employment month. One of the reasons for the decrease was that holiday hiring lagged behind last year. Starting in October, area retail managers predicted a slow holiday season. Overall, they were right. Stores reported holiday sales were down from last year.

In December, Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* decreased by 190 jobs from November 2001, and decreased 660 from December 2000. Nearly all sectors contributed to the decreases. Layoffs in key *Manufacturing* sectors started job decreases that rippled through the economy. The economic concern is that because nearly all industries posted decreases, there was little economic growth to help soften the layoffs. The only positives in December were slight increases in *Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate* and *Government Administration* jobs. The increase in *Government Administration*, which has recorded decreases throughout the year, increased in only one sector—Tribal employment.

SPECIAL TOPIC

Barge Traffic Halted

For three months beginning January 28, all barge traffic to and from the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley is suspended so the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can repair the locks at Lower Granite Dam. The closure is the longest since Lower Granite opened in 1975 and only the third extended one. The dam was the eighth one built along the Columbia and Snake Rivers and made it possible for large vessels to navigate the 465 miles between the coast and the western edge of Idaho. The impact will be felt in many key areas of the regional economy. Normally barges ship everything from wheat to paper products. Wheat shipments may come to a standstill during the closure but other goods, including peas and lentils, will likely go by truck to the Port of Pasco and then be transferred to barges. However, shippers will

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	Dec 2001*	Nov 2001	Dec 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	33,840	33,900	34,460	-0.2	-1.8
Unemployment	1,520	1,250	1,570	21.6	-3.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.5	3.7	4.6	0.8	0.1
Total Employment	32,320	32,650	32,890	-1.0	-1.7
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	33,920	33,780	34,700	0.4	-2.2
Unemployment	1,550	1,180	1,670	31.4	-7.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.6	3.5	4.8	1.1	0.2
Total Employment	32,370	32,600	33,030	-0.7	-2.0
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	25,410	25,600	26,070	-0.7	-2.5
Goods-Producing Industries	5,010	5,110	5,030	-2.0	-0.4
Mining & Construction	1,260	1,320	1,180	-4.5	6.8
Manufacturing	3,750	3,790	3,850	-1.1	-2.6
Food Processing	70	80	130	-12.5	-46.2
Lumber & Wood Products	690	710	740	-2.8	-6.8
Paper Products	1,700	1,700	1,680	0.0	1.2
All Other Manufacturing	1,290	1,300	1,300	-0.8	-0.8
Service-Producing Industries	20,400	20,490	21,040	-0.4	-3.0
Transportation	1,360	1,350	1,380	0.7	-1.4
Communications & Utilities	270	280	300	-3.6	-10.0
Wholesale Trade	940	940	960	0.0	-2.1
Retail Trade	4,870	4,890	5,310	-0.4	-8.3
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,390	1,380	1,410	0.7	-1.4
Services	6,390	6,480	6,660	-1.4	-4.1
Government Administration	2,700	2,670	2,420	1.1	11.6
Government Education	2,480	2,500	2,600	-0.8	-4.6

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

likely pay more. Potlatch Corporation, for example, expects to send the equivalent of 350 to 400 barge containers of pulp or paperboard by truck to Pasco each month. Typically Potlatch barges 40 percent of the pulp and paperboard it produces at Lewiston to overseas markets, most of which are in the Far East in countries such as China, Japan, and Korea. The Port of Lewiston expects to lose \$180,000 of the \$1 million in revenue it would normally anticipate from shipping containers in a year. About half of the 11 employees at the container yard will be laid off and the others may be hired temporarily at the port in Pasco. Passengers from Queen of the West, the largest cruise ship docking in the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley, will continue to visit the area for a tour of Hells Canyon, but they'll be making the last leg of the journey by bus. According to American West Steamboat Company spokesperson Joel Perry, "That's the highlight of the trip, so we're doing everything we can to accommodate that." The Corps timed the work carefully to create the fewest conflicts with shipping and fish migration. Historically the lowest volume of shipping has been during the months Lower Granite will be closed. From about April to October salmon and steelhead fish migrate to the ocean and back to their natal streams to breed. Lower Granite is set to re-open on April 29.

Seaport Table 2: Projected Employment Opportunities

Occupational Title	Wage Hour Average	Education or Training Level*
Accountants and auditors	\$17.52	Bachelor's degree
Adjustment clerks	\$9.86	Short-term on-the-job training
Automotive mechanics and service technicians	\$12.49	Postsecondary vocational training
Bank tellers	\$7.96	Short-term on-the-job training
Bartenders	\$6.19	Short-term on-the-job training
Bill and account collectors	\$8.89	Short-term on-the-job training
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	\$9.98	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Bus drivers, school	\$8.49	Short-term on-the-job training
Cashiers	\$7.14	Short-term on-the-job training
Child care workers	\$6.49	Short-term on-the-job training
Computer engineers	\$25.20	Bachelor's degree
Computer support specialists	\$15.52	Associate degree
Construction managers	\$24.24	Bachelor's degree
Cooks, institution or cafeteria	\$7.58	Long-term on-the-job training
Cooks, restaurant	\$7.33	Long-term on-the-job training
Counter clerks	\$7.15	Short-term on-the-job training
Dental assistants	\$10.21	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Electrical and electronic technicians and technologists	\$15.97	Associate degree
Electrical and electronics engineers	\$28.10	Bachelor's degree
Electricians	\$16.97	Long-term on-the-job training
Financial managers	\$24.71	Work experience plus degree
Guards	\$9.39	Short-term on-the-job training
Hand packers and packagers	\$6.87	Short-term on-the-job training
Heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers	\$14.17	Long-term on-the-job training
Insurance claims clerks	\$10.95	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Laborers, landscaping and groundskeeping	\$8.33	Short-term on-the-job training
Maintenance repairers, general utility	\$11.20	Long-term on-the-job training
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	\$7.63	Short-term on-the-job training
Office clerks, general	\$9.11	Short-term on-the-job training
Painters and paperhangers	\$10.09	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	\$16.67	Long-term on-the-job training
Police patrol officers	\$14.13	Long-term on-the-job training
Receptionists and information clerks	\$8.80	Short-term on-the-job training
Registered nurses	\$18.89	Associate degree
Retail salespersons	\$9.68	Short-term on-the-job training
Roofers	\$11.98	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Secretaries, except legal and medical	\$10.03	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks	\$10.86	Short-term on-the-job training
Systems analysts	\$23.37	Bachelor's degree
Teachers, elementary school	\$18.86	Bachelor's degree
Teachers, secondary school	\$19.33	Bachelor's degree
Waiters and waitresses	\$5.68	Short-term on-the-job training
Welders and cutters	\$11.97	Long-term on-the-job training

* 4=Work experience plus degree; 5=Bachelor's Degree; 6=Associate degree; 7=Postsecondary vocational training; 9=Long-term on-the-job training; 10=Moderate-term on-the-job training; 11=Short-term on-the-job training.

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As the Idaho Department of Labor talks with businesses and examines its databases, certain jobs have been determined to be employment opportunities in the future. The definition of "opportunity" includes those occupations that are the fastest growing, those occupations with high employment, and those jobs in high demand. Further, these "opportunity" occupations are those occupations that qualified applicants should have success in obtaining as identified through Job Service job orders. They are also jobs for which businesses are unable to find qualified applicants and new jobs emerging from new business in the region. As shown in Seaport Table 2 on page 10, projected employment opportunities are listed alphabetically and are not ranked in order. An evaluation of a broader list of 538 occupations can be found at the Idaho Department of Labor home page: <http://www.labor.state.id.us/lmi/wage-survey/lopmenu.htm>.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

Nearly \$2 million in federal and state grants have been acquired to develop a light manufacturing industrial site in Orofino. The grants will cover the development and land costs/construction of a 30,000-square-foot building. An expanding local company, Architectural Sign and Engraving, will be the anchor for the new building and needs about half of the space. The other half of the building will provide space to encourage local business to expand or outside companies to move to the county. Already companies have inquired and are being considered. A & R Construction of Lewiston will do the first phase of work on the industrial site. Work will begin at the end of January or early February. It is anticipated that bids will go out for Phase II work around April.

Idaho and Lewis Counties

A California aircraft engine business has been looking at several locations in Idaho, Clearwater, and Lewis Counties to relocate and will be making a final decision soon. Day-Air out of Stockton employs approximately 20 mechanics and support personnel in overhauling Pratt & Whitney aircraft engines. The business, which averages around \$1 million in sales annually, focuses on air attack aircraft such as the DC 4 and 6 models and the CL 215. These are the types of craft that have operated out of the Grangeville Air Center for firefighting missions. The expense of operating in California, along with that region's crowded growth and the desire to "escape the rat race," were among the factors for relocating. Due to their specialty work with 60-year-old technology, Day-Air trains its own mechanics and plans to hire locally for most of their jobs. The company is considering Grangeville, Orofino, and Kamiah.

Latah County

Renovation of the University Classroom Center at the University of Idaho (UI) was one of eight college or univer-

(continued on page 27)

Seaport—(Continued from page 10)

sity building projects placed on hold because of budget concerns. All state construction projects funded through Idaho's Permanent Building Fund were frozen after receiving a budget forecast \$20.3 million below previous projections. At the bottom of the list of possible cuts was university construction. Money slated for UI will be eliminated if Idaho's economy fails to pick up by spring. The announcement means at least a delay in the UI project. Renovation of the University Classroom Center was scheduled to begin June 24, but the university likely won't know for certain if money is available until July 1.

State Overview—(Continued from page 4)

accounted for most job losses in the *Goods-Producing Industries*. Cold, snowy winter weather was the primary reason for the decline. Within the *Services-Producing Industries*, job losses and gains were off-setting and followed normal seasonal patterns.

Construction is often used as a barometer of current economic conditions and of consumer expectations and confidence about the future. The number and value of residential and commercial building permits, as well as the number of jobs created by these projects, are the indicators most commonly cited. Although there was a seasonal decline in the number of *Construction* jobs in December month-over-month, the overall level of jobs in this industry remained relatively high over the year. The permit valuation for 2001 construction also remained strong. During the last two years, *Construction* jobs have numbered between 35,000 and 40,000 each month.

Mining continued its long-term job loss trend. Announced layoffs at Hecla's Lucky Friday Mine in Shoshone County in November was the latest blow to this industry and to Shoshone County's economy in particular. The *Mining* job count has dropped to the level that a job loss of 100 represents a 5.3 percent decline in employment.

The long-term trend of job losses also persisted within *Lumber & Wood Products*. The losses were concentrated in *Logging* and *Sawmills & Planing Mills*. Some of the loss is due to the normal winter slowdown in these industries. But the effects of layoffs, mill closures, timber harvest uncertainties, low prices, market competition, and slack demand for some manufactured wood products still exist and are not seasonal. The most telling number is the year-over-year change in which *Lumber & Wood Products* suffered a 9.6 percent decline in the number of jobs.

Many eyes have been focused on the economic picture of Idaho's electronics industries which is concentrated in two manufacturing segments: *Industrial & Commercial Machinery & Computer Equipment* ("computers and peripherals") and *Electronic & Other Electrical Equipment & Components, excluding Computers* ("chips"). The largest computer peripheral manufacturer in Idaho is Hewlett-

Nez Perce and Asotin Counties

The state's freeze on construction will delay Lewis-Clark State College's (LCSC) \$16.4 million activity center. Construction was scheduled to begin in March. The work already started on the parking lot will not be affected by the freeze. LCSC will evaluate bids and do all the work short of issuing a contract.

Doug Tweedy, Regional Labor Economist
1158 Idaho Street, Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-5000 ext. 307
E-mail: dtweedy@labor.state.id.us

Packard (Boise), best known for its laser jet printer operations. The largest chip manufacturer is Micron Technology (Boise), best known for its DRAM chip production. Both of these corporations have had to ride through the 2001 national recession that hit business investment expenditures particularly hard. These two industries reached their record-high job total in December 2000 when 25,600 jobs were on the payrolls. In December 2001, a slightly lower number of jobs—24,900—were on the payrolls. This equates to a 2.8 percent jobs loss. Although there have been significant layoffs, changes of ownership, or redirection in business objectives at some electronics firms, the job decline in these two industries ran counter to the meager, but positive growth rate of 0.2 percent for all industries. Even though negative, the job losses in electronics were less than that for all *Manufacturing*, which declined by 3.5 percent. Nationally, the year-over-year job losses in these two industries ranged from 11 to 19 percent. Idaho's job losses could have been much more severe if chip manufacturing had not maintained a fairly constant jobs count.

Retail Trade is a major source of jobs in Idaho. There was a slight increase in the number of jobs in December month-over-month. The 2001 holiday shopping season was not an engine for job growth. *General Merchandise Stores* actually lost 100 jobs. Anticipated lowered consumer confidence led many employers to refrain from hiring temporary, seasonal workers resulting in a year-over-year loss of 900 jobs. Several closures and downsizing in the *Food Store* sector during the year resulted in a job loss of 1,000 from December 2000.

Job gains in *Eating & Drinking Places, Hotels & Other Lodging Places*, and *Amusement & Recreation Services* signified some return of business and tourist travel as well as people taking advantage of the early snow to begin their winter recreation activities.

James Adams, Sr. Planner/Economist
317 W. Main Street, Boise, ID 83735
(208) 332-3570, ext. 3220
E-mail: jadams@labor.state.id.us